

Cooking Fires are the Leading Cause of Home Blazes

Cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires and home-fire injuries in the U.S. Cooking was responsible for 117,100 home fires in 2001, which resulted in 370 deaths, 4,290 injuries and \$453 million in property damage. The NFPA offers the following advice on how to reduce the risk of cooking fires:



- Don't cook if you feel drowsy or are affected by drugs, alcohol or medications.
- Always wear short, tight-fitting sleeves when cooking. If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop and roll until the fire is out.
- Keep children and pets away from cooking areas. Designate a three-foot child-free zone around the stove.
- Never leave cooking unattended, and always keep a close watch on food cooking inside the oven. A serious fire can start in just seconds.
- Turn pot handles inward to avoid spills. Always use a potholder when reaching for handles.
- Keep towels, pot holders and curtains away from flames and hot surfaces.
- Clean cooking surfaces regularly to prevent grease buildup which can ignite.
- If a fire breaks out while cooking, put a lid on the pan to smother it. You may also use baking soda. Never throw water on a grease fire.
- Heat oil gradually to avoid burns from spattering grease. Use extra caution when preparing deep-fried foods.
- Place a rubber mat on the floor in front of your stove to give you added traction in case liquids or grease spill.
- Never use the range or oven to heat your home. In addition to being a fire hazard, toxic fumes may leak into your home.
- Double-check the kitchen before you go to bed or leave the house. Make sure all other appliances are turned off.
- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test the batteries every month, and change them once a year.